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THE DYING SKEPTIC.

Lo! there in yonder fancy-haunted room,
What muttered curses tremble through the gloom,
When pale and shivering, and bedew'd with fear,
The dying skeptic felt his hour drew near!
From his parched tongue no weak hosannas fell.
No bright hope kindled at his faint farewell;
As the last throes of death convulsed his cheek,
He gnashed, and scowled, and raised a hideous shriek,
Rounded his eyes into ghastly glare,
Locked his white lips—and all was mute despair.

THE DESERTER:

A Story of the American Revolution.

BY LUCY SEYMOUR.

(Concluded.)

CHAPTER IV.

A week sped by. Col. Courtney had rejoined his regiment, and Beauclerk and Edward were both with theirs, when one morning as Adelaide and Emma sat at work, Major Lee was announced. A visit from that officer was no startling event, for he was well known to Mr. Courtney, and occasionally called on him. Yet did the color vary strangely on the cheek of Emma, and her heart beat nervously as she rose to bid him welcome. Perhaps he observed her embarrassment, for glancing from her to her companion he jocosely asked,

"Pray, ladies, have I interrupted a discussion of the *the* particular subject, or did you expect to see not the head, but one of the inferior officers of Lee's regiment, when you heard my knock?"

"We were not discussing any subject," Adelaide replied in the same strain, "and having seen Major Lee dismount, could not well mistake him for and inferior, although we might, perchance, have imagined him the commander-in-chief himself."

"Especially as he is accompanied by such a princely retinue," said the Major General laughing, and pointing to his usual attendants, two large dogs. "Come away, Cato, off! off!" added he, addressing one of his canine friends who had sprung toward Emma and was licking her extended hand. "You do not seem afraid of dogs, Miss Courtney, at least of that dog," pursued he, as she patted the head of the animal who laid himself down quietly at her feet, "but I presume," continued he with his accustomed archness, "that you are old acquaintances." This remark did not lessen the confusion of the young lady, who indeed was no stranger to Cato, for he was much attached to Fitz-Roy, and had frequently followed him to the dwelling of Mr. Courtney. Of many a delightful ramble had he been the companion with Adelaide, Edward and his friend. "Poor Cato!" proceeded Major Lee, "I was rather fearful he too would turn deserter a few days ago. He appeared completely lost,—for example, you know, Miss Beauclerk, is exceedingly infectious, particularly if presented by one we love."

"Do you apprehend," inquired Adelaide, "that the example of Sergeant Fitz-Roy will be followed by any of the common soldiers, sir?"

"No, my dear young lady, nor by the uncommon either," he said, rather quickly. He met the glance of Emma, and, perhaps, its scrutiny annoyed him, for he added carelessly, "the desertion of Fitz-Roy was too bold and daring to have many imitators, even among men whose profession naturally renders them both."

At this juncture a servant informed Miss Courtney that his master had requested Major Lee should join him. She rose to lead the way. As she reached the door she paused, and noticing that Adelaide remained behind, she said hurriedly, but with a look of intelligence,

"Edward is so very miserable, I would entreat one word, Major Lee. No particulars—only say, you understand me—that my trust is not misplaced—one word—any thing—for Edward's sake."

"And not yours?" said Lee, half archly, but deeply interested by her hurried, agitated, intensely anxious manner, and varying countenance.

"For mine let it be, then," she faultered, scarcely able to draw her breath.

"Emma," said Major Lee with much perturbation, "whatever you suspect, you must be silent; yes, even to your brother. Remember," he added in a tone of solemn authority, "even to him you must breathe no word, no hint. Life, many lives, and one you highly value, depends upon profound secrecy. And my honor, too, heavens!" muttered he, "all in the power of a woman."

"All, all are safe, believe me," she replied, placing her hand on her heart.

"Better affect to think him traitorous," whispered Lee. Her eye said, she could not do that, but the officer, all sceptical as he was of the truth of woman, could scarcely look on a face where, at that moment, mind and heart were both so legible, and doubt, or fear to trust her.

From that hour, Emma Courtney spoke no more of the young deserter. Adelaide believed her convinced of his unworthiness by Major Lee, and told Beauclerk so to encourage his hopes, for she knew her brother had not been free from jealousy of the handsome Fitz-Roy. Emma's continued cheerful attention to her daily duties, seemed to confirm his sister's words, and Beauclerk began to picture a happy future with Emma for his bride. Edward ceased to name Fitz-Roy, but the memory of their former friendship was kept green within his breast, and many a kindly gush of feeling towards his fellow men was driven back to its source, and frozen there, by the recollection of his misplaced confidence.—By a letter from Colonel Courtney, they heard that Fitz-Roy had been sent to New York, to join Sir Henry Clinton. The fate of Andre yet undetermined, excited deep sympathy in both the British and American army, and efforts were made by the commander-in-chief of the latter to procure an exchange for Arnold. These endeavors were vain: time passed on, and the young English officer was executed.

Some months after the desertion of Fitz-Roy, Aubrey Beauclerk, encouraged by his sister, though gathering little hope from the uniformly kind, but unembarrassed manner she manifested towards him, offered his heart and hand to Emma. She gently but firmly rejected him. Edward still condemning himself for his conduct relative to Fitz-Roy, and believing that the happiness of Emma would be better ensured in a union with one so noble and so ardently attached to her as Beauclerk, than in brooding over bitter memories, espoused his cause. Her father and Mrs. Murray, both advocated his suit It cost our young heroine a severe struggle to cross the wishes of all those she most valued,—when the cause, too, of her inflexibility was to remain unrevealed, but she was resolute in her first decision. Edward ventured, in a private conversation with her, to introduce the subject which weighed so heavily on his heart, urging her for his sake to accept Beauclerk. She assured him that he was mistaken relative to her unhappiness, and with a deep blush, but earnest tone, declared that she had never entertained a feeling towards her former friend, with which she wished to part.

"Yet I was sure you admired him, Emma?"

"So I did; he was worthy of admiration," she hesitated.

"And you excuse him now?" he said inquiringly.

"We are all liable to deception—may he not think himself right?" she asked faulteringly. "Better that she should thus blindly trust and be happy, than see clearly and be as misanthropic as I," thought Edward. He could not bid Beauclerk hope, but he did not say depair, for he felt that his sister's very indulgence to human frailty rendered her more likely to return Aubrey's attachment, than if she had sympathized more with his chilled feelings. "Woman's heart," said he to himself, "is different from man's. She calls change what he knows to be deceit, and, accommodating herself to circumstances, secures her own felicity. He, once disappointed, trusts no more: his emotions harden. Was he right? The truth of his theory could not be tested by Beauclerk, for a short time after that young officer was slain in the service of his country. Emma wept his early fate with sincere regret, but not the regret of love. After his decease his sister took the first opportunity the state of the war permitted, of following her grandparents to England, and, at the close of the war, became the wife of Colonel, afterwards Sir Lewis Courtney.

CHAPTER V.

On the removal of Major Lee's army to the southern States to co-operate with the forces of Gen. Green, Mr. Courtney went thither also with his family, for the double purpose of benefiting his health, and enjoying the occasional visits of his son Edward.

One evening in the month of May, Lieutenant, then Captain Courtney, was proceeding to the temporary abode of his father, when the report of a gun reached his ear, and looking toward a thick wood he beheld a man in British uniform stoop to secure the game he had brought down. Apprehending a surprise, Courtney's first impulse was to prepare for defence, when the stranger raised his averted head, and exhibited to his bewildered gaze the features of Fitz-Roy—him who had excited his first romantic dream of friendship, and destroyed it. Checking his horse suddenly in the astonishment of the moment, he sat like one petrified, with his eyes riveted on the young soldier, who regarded him with equal intenseness. Their glance met, and Fitz-Roy sprang forward with extended hand, while his features were illuminated with pleasure. Edward was irresolute as to the course he should pursue, but involuntarily bent to greet him, as Fitz-Roy pronounced his name. Ere their hands clasped, however, Courtney withdrew his, and said coldly:

"Before I can meet Mr. Fitz-Roy as a personal friend, I must inquire in what relation he stands to my country."

"The same in which I always stood," he proudly replied, while his face flushed deeply, and adding reproachfully, "could *you* doubt me, Edward?" Without noticing or appearing to notice the last remark, Courtney said still coldly, "your answer is equivocal, Mr. Fitz-Roy; circumstances are strangely altered since we last met."

"Do you think my heart has changed, Lieutenant Courtney?"

"If not your heart, your judgment has singularly misled you," returned Edward, but more gently, and with increasing interest.

"If I have gone astray, more hearts and heads than one are responsible," said the young man with emotion, "did you, could you believe, Lieutenant Courtney, that a man could encounter disgrace, death, and even infamy without a motive?"

"No Fitz-Roy, but it was the inexplicableness of that motive which perplexed, I might say, tortured me. Could my eyes deceive me? Did you not desert?"

"I did."

"And wherefore?"

"You never knew then?" inquired Fitz-Roy with thoughtful earnestness, "and for this long period you have deemed me a traitor, while I have lived upon the hope that you at least would judge me generously, I might say justly. But how could you have formed any other opinion?" he added still more agitated, "yes, all, all must link my name with obloquy,—even *she*."

"Would that I understood you," said Edward gravely, "if I have wronged you, Heaven is my witness, the suffering I have experienced in suspecting you has been sufficient to expiate the offence. But whither are you going, Fitz-Roy?"

"To Major Lee, if you will direct me."

"In British uniform? your life will be endangered. You know how the army regards you."

"I am not to accompany Lieutenant Courtney, then?" he proudly replied, "but it matters not. After dwelling so long among enemies, I need not fear to encounter those who ought to be my friends. Farewell, Lieutenant Courtney; when next we meet, you will have learnt to be more just."

"You shall not go thus, Charles," Edward cried hastily dismounting, and seizing his arm, "I must, I will believe you innocent in defiance of all."

"And your sister!" exclaimed Fitz-Roy grasping his hand, and looking into his face with an expression of intense and concentrated feeling, "is she well—unmarried?"

"Both," was the reply, "and excuses, if she does not justify you."

"Where is Emma? I must see her instantly," cried Capt. Courtney a few hours after the above related adventure, as he entered his grandmother's chamber. His sister instantly appeared. "Do not turn pale. I have joyful news. Now tell me of whom you thought when your color changed so," and he passed his arm affectionately around her waist, and drew her to a sofa.

"Of Lewis," she said faulteringly.

"Of Lewis, only?"

"Edward, what can you mean? you said."

"I had joyful news. *He* has returned ennobled by his desertion, and with a halo of fame around him, he had else never known. His name will now stand high on history's page, when yours and mine, Emma, are forgotton. Fitz-Roy should be a hero of romance. He risked his reputation, and his all to save the life of a gallant and unfortunate foe, Maj. Andre, without compromising his country's dignity. The plan was suggested by Washington. Lee proposed its execution to Fitz-Roy, as the only one in his regiment capable of such a noble effort, a compliment to your brother, Emma. The object was to arrest the traitor Arnold, and thus free Andre. Fitz-Roy had prepared every thing to ensure his success, and a party headed by Lee, (I ought to have been one) waited by his order on the Hudson, to receive the renegade. An unforeseen event ruined all; Arnold's legion, of which Charles was a member, was removed suddenly to one of the fleets of transports, and he was condemned to linger among his enemies until on the conjunction of the British army at Petersburg he effected his escape. Imagine his feelings, Emma. His scheme defeated in the moment of fulfilment—Andre executed—a shade of infamy dark and deep on his name—tortured with all a *doubting* lover's wild imaginings — he returns—meets his friend, who coldly accuses him of treachery—learns that she in whom his hopes of happiness were garnered up, believes"—Edward paused.

"You did not say I believed him guilty," she involuntarily exclaimed in the eagerness and absorption of her interest. His arch look recalled her consciousness, and she hid her blushing face on his bosom. * * * * *

"You have risked much, endured much, Fitz-Roy," said Lee, on that same evening as the young sergeant recounted his adventures, "but after all," he added archly, "you will not regret the past, when I tell you there was *one*, who when the cloud rested most darkly on your name still thought you true. She even, saucy girl! implicated me in your crime. I have been accused, and not perhaps, without reason, of being wanting in admiration of the fair sex. But I must allow them one virtue, and that is constancy, or else make an exception in her favor. Let woman once confide, and it seems you cannot shake her trust. Your father was my friend, you are no common man, Fitz-Roy, yet I must say, if you succeed in winning Emma Courtney, you will never have reason to regret, that you once counterfeited the part of a Deserter."

From the New Orleans Picyune.

Uncle Ike's Pony.

Of all the tarnation creatures that ever came into this world just for a plague, our Uncle Ike's pony was a leetle o' the outdashest! Such a haw hawin' as Jim Corkins' boys used to set up, when Uncle Ike tried to turn him around the corner, so as to get him down the lane, was a caution to screech owls. Old Malac Jinkins said it put her in mind of one Mister Spangler that she's hern tell on, that had his hoss's tail tore rite smack out on account of his bein' too obstroperlous; but Uncle Ike alwus reckoned that his hoss couldn't be cured without it was 'driv in.' Uncle Ike never could, somehow or nother, git fairly mounted but the sarpent would back right agin the fence, and rare up like a haystack. "You darned everlastin critter," says uncle Ike, "why on airth can't you go ahead jist as easy as to back agin that ere fence?" And then uncle Ike would git off and give him a pooty considerable smart hidin', but he wouldn't dast to git on him agin, cos he'd run when he got licked for about half a day, jist like a mad bull after a streak of lightnin', and uncle Ike was a leetle afeard, at sich times, of gittin' his head works knocked all to squash. And he was just as ugly as sin in harness, and uncle Ike said if he warn't a family hoss, a kind o' air loom, he'ud a got rid o' him long ago, cos there warrent no doin nothin with him no how. So there warnt but one fellow down about our parts that could come it over the pony, and that fellow was Joe Beadle, he that used to court Jane Wiggins, and he could manage that critter just as easy as whistlin.—Wal, it come out one night that there was to be a dance at the Town Hall, and Betsy Johnson, Joaney Rogers, Keziah Taylor, and a hull bilin o' gals, allowed that they had determined to go. So they raked and scraped about to git fellers, and Keziah pitched upon Joe, cos she wanted to rile Jane Wiggins, for tellin ant Susen that she (Keziah) had to borrow a pair of stockins to go to George Riley's weddin. Wal, Joe agreed to hitch on, cos he sorter kalkilated that Jane would git that town feller, Dick Willson, that sot in the Deacon's pew the Sunday afore, to go along o' her, and he wanted to know for sartin sure. So there was allfired prime sleighin, and Joe went down to Keziah, and tackled up their spankin' Bill, and got in and set off. Dick stood out for the pony, and Jane jingled in with him, though uncle was dreadful onwillin, but it was two agin one; he at last gin in, howsomdever he told 'em aforehand, that he shouldn't a mite wonder if they both cum hum missin. So they rigged out and put off pooty darned fierce slickrite past Bets Johnson's team, and beat Joe Beadle all to nothin. Lor! Golly! didn't Jane puss up and look as large as all outdoors when they past Keziah, and didn't Keziah look rite strate ahead, jist as though there wa'nt nothin happind. They went on at a pooty smart jog, till they cum up to Squire Gay's mills and there was an old burnt trunk, that laid kind o' slantindicular along the road. At sight o' that, the pony sheered and hauled street up. "Hollo you varmint, git up!" says Dick —"darn ye if ye dont I'll wallop ye!" and he did wallop him, first right hand, then left, then both hands, till he got reglarly tuckered out, and all of a stream o' sweat, and then Jane she tuck up the whip and laid it on the critter like Thanksgivin into punkin pies; jist then along cums Bets and all hands, and sich a time as they had was a warnin to strangers. Joe Beadle undertook to cut around Dick's team handsum, but the old critter sheered off, upsot the slay, and out went Joe and Keziah chewollup into the snow bank. Bets Johnson's sleigh got into the same rut, and they went heels over head along side. The pony started to run off, knocked over Dick Willson, and tore one leg of his trowserloons clear off, cotched the slay up agin a pile o' plank—knocked it into a cocked hat, and tore for hum like all natur. As for Dick he heard one of the boys hint that his trowserloons were made for some man with one leg, so he picked himself up and scattered arter the pony. Keziah's bonnet got smashed into a pickter o' misery; and she lost one shoe into the bargain, but at last they all got stowed away agin, and Jane got into Bets Johnson's slay, and off they went to the ball; but the hull story had got there afore 'em, and when they got in there was a general snickerin, till by me, one long nose feller at the top of the hall, hawhawed rite out, and then so on one arter another chock down the room. I vow but didn't we have a prime time that night; the gals warnt none o' the ugliest, and jist before brakin up time, the fellers got the fiddler drunk, and put out all the lights, and sich a scratchin for bonnets and cloaks, and sich a huggin and kissin, and screamin, and gittin hum thro' the snow banks, warnt no laughin matters for hyenas. Jane Wiggins never after trusted the pony without Joe Beadle, and the gals gineralily allowed that they'd not had half the sport only for that sarpent—Uncle Ike's pony.

From the Raleigh Register.

Economy on a Small Scale.

A subscriber yesterday sent us a request to discontinue his paper, assigning as a reason, that the times were so hard it became necessary to lop off expenses. So far as our experience goes, it establishes the position that the *very first* expense a man retrenches, when he gets into an economical fit, is the subscription to his newspaper. "Newspapers are things," argues he, "which can be dispensed with, and cost money that might be saved." Agreed: so may the schooling of our children—so, indeed may nine-tenths of the articles necessary to our comfort and support. Any man may get rich who will live on bread and water and clothe himself in rags. But who would live like a brute, for the mere pleasure of saving money, which he cannot carry hence with him? There are few such—five or ten in three million—and how wretched are they? Most men, sensible they must die, are disposed to enjoy a little of the fruits of their own labor; and nothing is perhaps more necessary to the enjoyment of society, or to self-satisfaction in retirement, than a well-informed and virtuous mind. It gives a zest to all things in prosperity, and is the best source in adversity.

Newspapers are the best possible channels for obtaining an acquaintance with the affairs of the world, and to implant desires in the hearts of youth for maturity. In truth, they are the great engine that moves the moral and political world, and not only aid in establishing the character, but in preserving the liberties of the people. Viewed in this light, and it is not too strong a one, we would ask—are there not an hundred items of expenditure, which a person ought to cut off, rather than deprive himself of the solid benefit derived from a good newspaper?

A Retort Courteous,

OR IF NOT COURTEOUS WHY "TIT FOR TAT."

The following amusing incident occurred on board one of the Hudson river steamborts a few days since as we have discovered in looking through our Albany Microscope. At the supper table sat a little lump of affectation, in form very like a female—a fashionable. Opposite her sat a young gentleman, rather queer looking though very polite withal, who, desirous of making the most of time, as most do at the supper table on board of steamboats, made use of the knife by his own plate in helping himself to butter, unconsious what he had committed a heinous offence. Her indignant flirtationship immediately cried out, "Waitah! Waitah! take away this butter, this rude man has had his knife in it." She was obeyed.—In the course of a few moments our hero very politely offered her ladyship some dried beef, which she being exceedingly fond of, could not refuse to take though it was passed to her by such a brute. She reached out her pretty *fingers*, took some of the luxury, and placed it on her own plate.—"Waiter!" cried out the hero at the top of his voice, "take away the smoked beef; this rude woman has had her fingers in it."—(*Bost. Dem.*

Why Woman was taken from the Ribs.—Matthew Henry says; Woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam;—not made out of his head, to top him—not out of his feet, to be trampled upon by him—but out of his side, to be equal with him; under his arm, to be protected; and near to his heart, to be beloved.

A New Treasury Feat—Nathan Sergeant, late a federal whig editor, has received the appointment of Inspector of Timber in Florida. This is entirely a new office, the duties of which, it is suggested, will be to watch the trees to see that they grow straight.

Woman's Love. — An Irishman was lately imprisoned in New Orleans. His wife was permitted to visit his window. She took her two children and with them remained in the same position till her husband's release. She was advised by some, who felt her grief, to go home, when she replied that she "had no home if *he could not come to it.*" Her remark comprises volumes, and evinces woman's deep and ardent devotion, to the man she loves. What more feeling and beautiful reply could have been framed than the one, she "had no home if he could not come to it."

Singing School. — A Texas Editor states that the musquetoes have established a singing school in his bed-room.

The geographical knowledge of the English editors is proverbial. Bell's Life in London states that Gen. Harrison died at the national mansion in *Boston!* Say no more about the map of the World used by the Chinese.

How many young ladies are there who would be mortified to the last degree if a frill or a collar, or other parts of their dress were displaced, but who, on being detected in ignorance even in the history of their own country, would own it without a blush?

A Hibernian was once taken to prison for stealing a gun. On hearing that a man, who had stolen a goose, had got released because he produced a witness who swore that he possessed the bird when it was a gosling, Pat tried to get a fellow to swear that he had the gun ever since it was a pistol!—*Pennant.*

Why is the Baltimore Patriot of late always *one day later* in reaching our table than the other Baltimore papers? We feel the absence of the Patriot nearly as much as we would the loss of our scissors.—*St. Louis Republican.*

Any one who reads our neighbor's paper will be satisfied that the Patriot and his scissors are very intimate acquaintances—although Scissors *cuts* his Baltimore friend twenty times a day.—*Pennant.*

Bots in Horses.—A dose of Molasses, is said, on the authority of experiment, to be effectual.

Politeness on all Occasions.—At a wedding recently which took place at the altar, when the officiating priest put to the lady the home question, "Wilt thou take this man to be thy wedded husband?" she dropped the prettiest courtesy, and with a modesty which lent her beauty an additional grace, replied, "If you please, sir." Charming simplicity.

Contemptible.—To see a weak man take advantage of his weakness to be insolent.